

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 11, 15 and 35-38 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 2, 4-10, 12-14 and 16-34 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, Claims 11 and 15 are amended, and Claims 35-38 are added by the present amendment. Amended Claims 11 and 15 and new Claims 35-38 are deemed to be self-evident from the original disclosure including originally filed Claims 11 and 13-15, for example. No new matter is added.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1, 9, 11, 24, 27, 30 and 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph; Claims 1, 2, 4-10, 30 and 31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over the combination of Hayashi et al. (U.S. Patent 5,754,708, herein “Hayashi”) and Suzuki (U.S. Patent 5,742,410) in view of Sikes et al. (U.S. Patent 6,058,201, herein “Sikes”); Claim 19 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over the combination of Hayashi, Suzuki, Sikes in view of Farrel et al. (U.S. Patent 6,222,642, herein “Farrel”); Claims 22, 23 and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over the combination of Hayashi, Suzuki, Sikes in view of Sakano et al. (U.S. Patent 5,473,444, herein “Sakano”); and Claims 14 and 15 were indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form.

At the outset, Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that Claims 14 and 15 include allowable subject matter.

In addition, Applicants note that the first Office Action dated February 9, 2004 indicated that originally filed Claims 14 and 15 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening

claims.¹ In this last regard, Claim 11 is amended to substantially correspond to originally filed Claim 11 and to include the features of intervening original Claim 13 and the allowable features of original Claim 14. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that Claim 11, and Claim 15 depending therefrom, should be allowed.

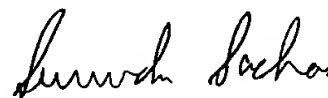
Further, new Claims 35-38 are added. New independent Claims 35 and 37 are directed to a method of processing an image and an image processing system, respectively, and each of the claims includes features substantially similar to the features recited in Claim 11. Accordingly, Claims 35 and 37, and Claims 36 and 38 depending therefrom, should be allowed.

Finally, it is respectfully submitted that all of the rejections summarized above are rendered moot in view of the amendments to Claim 11 and the cancellation of Claims 1, 2, 4-10, 12-14 and 16-34.

As no other issues are pending in this application, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is now in condition for formal allowance, and it is hereby respectfully requested that this case be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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¹ See page 8, paragraph 6, of the Office Action dated February 9, 2004.